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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 005176

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/31/2016

TAGS: PREL FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH ON LEBANON FOR AUGUST 1 GAERC

REF: 7/28 EMAIL ON SPECIAL AUGUST 1 LEBANON GAERC

POINTS

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In response to reftel points, MFA CFSP deputy Pascal LeDeunff told us July 31 that the Finnish Presidency had not/not submitted language for a draft conclusion. Given French need for language calling for an immediate cease-fire, and British opposition to the same, LeDeunff said, the French did not see how a conclusion would be possible.

¶2. (C) LeDeunff restated the "indispensability" for France of an immediate cease-fire and the importance of "dealing with things in order" by moving from a cease-fire to a political accord among all parties and only then deploying an international force. "Don't put the cart before the horse" in seeking to talk about an international force before either a cease-fire or a political accord are achieved, LeDeunff stressed.

¶3. (C) LeDeunff argued that the French position of demanding an immediate cease-fire was supported by a "large number" of its European partners. At the GAERC, he said, the FMs would first talk about humanitarian aid for southern Lebanon -- how to coordinate efforts better, do more, and call on the parties to provide safe passage for humanitarian convoys. After the humanitarian discussion, the FMs would turn to the political aspects, where the French would present the draft resolution that they submitted on July 30 in New York. LeDeunff restated, "We must not engage or debate the idea of the international force now -- it is premature."

¶4. (C) LeDeunff said the ministers would then turn to the Israeli-Palestinian situation, which, while perhaps less dramatic at the moment, was still real and could offer a key to unblock matters on the Israeli-Lebanese front.

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